

Appl. No. 10/696,151  
Amdt. dated March 21, 2005  
Reply to Office action of March 1, 2005

#### REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

##### Status

This is in response to an Office action dated 03/01/2005.

Claims 1-7, 9, 10, 12-14, and 19-26 are pending.

Claims 1-7, 9, 12-14, 19-21, and 23-26 are rejected.

Claims 10 and 22 are objected to.

##### *Claim Objections*

Claims 4-7, 19, and 20 are objected to because of the following informalities:

Regarding claims 4-7, 19, and 20, the limitation "a strap" is objected to since claims 1 and 12 already define a strap. In claims 4, 6, and 7, "a strap" should be changed to read "the strap is". In claims 5, 19, and 20, the limitation "a strap" should be changed to read "the strap".

Applicant has made the requested changes. (Except claim 19, which is totally amended.)

##### *Allowable Subject Matter*

Claims 10 and 22 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter:

Regarding claim 10, the prior art of record, either singularly or in combination, does not disclose or suggest the combination of limitations including the strap extends no higher than the collar.

Regarding claim 22, the prior art of record, either singularly or in combination, does not

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disclose or suggest the combination of limitations including the strap is fully vertically embedded in the collar and it is laterally surrounded by the collar.

Applicant has amended claims 10 and 22 to be in independent form, and has canceled claim 1. Various ones of the claims depending from claim 1 have been amended to depend from allowable claims 10 and 22.

Independent method claim 12 (rejected) is amended to parallel more closely allowable/rewritten independent apparatus claim 10. The node conducting element is specifically recited. However, whereas in claim 10 the collar is disposed at least partially outside of the trench, this limitation is removed from claim 12 (moved to claim 19), in favor of the patentable limitations that "the strap extends no higher than the collar." This allowable strap limitation is "imported" from claim 19. Claim 12 is a little more specific than claim 10 where it recites the recess on the top inside corner of the collar as the place where the strap is embedded. Claim 12 should now be allowable.

Newly presented claim 27 is directed to "the collar covers a bottom portion of the strap" (compare claim 23).

Newly presented claim 28 is directed to "the strap is fully vertically embedded in the collar and it is laterally surrounded by the collar" (compare claim 22).

In light of the amendments made herein, the rejections under 35 USC § 102 and 35 USC § 103 are moot.

#### ***Claim Count***

There remain 20 total claims, 3 of which are in independent form.

No fee is required.

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***Conclusion***

The claims should be allowed.

No new matter is entered by this amendment.

Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

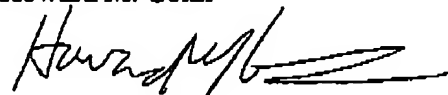
  
Howard M. Cohn  
Reg. No. 25,808

**CERTIFICATE OF TRANSMISSION BY FACSIMILE**

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being transmitted to the United States Patent and Trademark Office (Fax No. 703-872-9306) on March 21, 2005.

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